

6-1945

## United Women's Conference

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### Recommended Citation

Maddex, Helen J. (1945) "United Women's Conference," *Woman C.P.A.*: Vol. 7 : Iss. 4 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/wcpa/vol7/iss4/2>

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# United Women's Conference

HELEN J. MADDEX C.P.A., San Francisco, California

We, here at San Francisco, have had an opportunity to observe, more or less at first hand, the laying of the groundwork for the peace to come. On May 19, 1945, I represented our organizations at the *United Women's Conference*, a meeting to discuss "*Women's Share in Implementing the Peace*." The discussions to which I listened were not directed at any particular group or profession, but rather were for the benefit of all women—not as women but as citizens of the world.

There were too many speakers to report in detail the thoughts expressed by each of them. However, I would like to give you the highlights from the papers read by Dr. Esther Brunauer, Miss Josephine Schain, Mrs. Vera Michelis Deane, Dr. Helen Dwight Reid, Dean Virginia C. Gildersleeve, all from our own country; Mrs. Jessie Street, Australia; Dr. Bertha Lutz, Brazil; Dr. Wu Yi-Fang, China; Miss Minerva Bernardino, Dominican Republic; and Mr. Jan Masaryk, Czechoslovakia. The thoughts expressed in the following paragraphs are not mine, but merely my summing up of the speeches at this conference, although they do coincide with my opinions on international affairs.

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We, in the United States, must realize that we are no longer set apart, that if we are to have a future we must build it through a community of nations. That does not mean that there will not be differences of opinion between the nations, because there will. This community of nations may be compared to a family, in that we all know that perfect harmony does not exist even in the closest of family units. Families live together in harmony, because they have learned that there comes a time when each member of that family must compromise in one way or another, in order to retain unity.

The United States is a great power, but we could not win the war alone and we must remember that we cannot win the peace alone. We must also remember that great power means great responsibility. Power as such is neither good nor evil, it is the use to which it is put which renders it good or

evil. It is the duty of every one of us to see that our Congress wields this power for the ultimate good. We should write our view to our Senators, our Congressmen, or representatives in the State, City and County law-making bodies. True, to write these letters will take a certain amount of time, but if we are to make this peace *our* peace, and this world *our* world, we must be willing to do something constructive about it.

In order to express an opinion intelligently, we must be informed. The children in the schools, by means of a program of education on international affairs, should be given an awareness of the world. How many of us realize the inadequacy of our early training in international thinking and the geography of the world? If the youth of this country were encouraged to discuss international relations and to study them, then, as they become adults, relations with other nations would not be such a strange and fearsome thing. Education of the youth of the United States along international lines should be the goal of every adult. We should make it our duty to see that an intelligent, informative program of this kind is instituted in our schools and that discussion of foreign affairs is encouraged in the home.

Adults obtain their information from newspapers, the radio and from news magazines. How many of us have every stopped to consider the bias of some of the sources of our information in the United States? If we, as readers and listeners, were to demand a more complete coverage, a less opinionated rendition of international news, and a more balanced editorial policy, it would do much toward harmonious settlement of world affairs. Write a letter to your editor once in a while. It may not seem like much, but enough letters to enough editors, may change policies which are harmful to our nation.

\* \* \*

I came from that meeting with this thought—that we should work, not as women, but as citizens of the world, for a just and lasting peace; that we should have the courage and the vision to cross the threshold to international relations.